134. Constitutional reforms.

Mr. V. Achutha Menon B. A. (Member, Trivandrum Taluk) prefaced his representation with a request that he might be permitted, first to express the gratitude of the Assembly to the Government for their cognition of the fact that the past two or three years in Travancore had witnessed phenomenal growth in the political consciousness of the people. He urged that in consequence the reforms advocated a few years ago would no longer satisfy the politically minded classes in the country and referred to the wave of democratic sentiment sweeping over the world. He stated that what the people of Travancore wished for was responsible self-government. He dwelt at length on the ancient history of Travancore to show that responsible government was not unknown in this part of India and added that educationally Travancore was as fitted for exercising the high functions of self-government as any other Indian State or Province. He then pointed out some of the defects in the existing system of administration and very strongly urged the necessity for the inauguration of a series of constitutional changes to firmly establish responsible government in Travancore. By way of a few specific suggestions, he stated that it was absolutely necessary that Travancore should have an Executive Council consisting of three members inclusive of the Dewan. The two additional members should be elected by the legislature and should hold office ordinarily for three years. The Legislative Council should have the right of removing them from office, even before the expiry of their term, if the Council so desired. To ensure continuity of policy, all questions of broad policy and all the higher functions of Government should be decided and administered by responsible Ministers.

The Member next advocated the reform of the Legislative Council. The Legislative Council, he said, should be made thoroughly representative, based on a broad franchise with a four-fifth elected majority. The number of members should be so increased as to enable the Council to represent all classes and interests. The nomination of non-official members should be based on recommendations of well-known and permanent associations representing important communities. The official block should be removed. The official members should be allowed to give expression to their individual views and be left to vote according to their conscience. The right of putting supplementary questions should be given not only to the questioner but also to the other members. The resolutions of the Council should be made binding on the executive. His Highness the Maha Raja might reserve to himself the right of veto. Section 13 of Regulation I of 1095 should be deleted.

His next representation was in respect of the reform of the Popular Assembly. He stated that the popular demand was for the Assembly to be placed on a statutory basis. He suggested for the consideration of Government the necessity for a statutory recognition of the Assembly as an integral part of the constitution of the State and for enlarging its scope and usefulness by giving its members the additional powers of interpellation and passing resolutions on subjects of general public interest. The number of questions each member might put might be limited to three, and the number of resolutions which the House might be allowed to discuss should be not more than twelve per session. The life of every Assembly should be extended to three years and two sessions might be held annually, and the Member added that the head of the administration need not preside throughout the session.

Dewan's reply.—The Member's representations are noted.

135. Administrative reforms that require immediate attention.

Mr. A. K. Govindan Channar (Member, Nominated) thanked the Dewan at the outset for his promise that the Legislative Council would be reformed in accordance with the request of the people. He then observed that responsible government was very necessary in a country like Travancore where the people had a high degree of education and that administrative reforms should as a rule be in conformity with the wishes of the people. He then examined in detail the origin and expansion of the present Legislative Council and asserted that Regulation I of 1095, which was the basis of the existing Council, was most unsatisfactory and least liked by the people, inasmuch as the power to

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly